9/9/70

Mr. Aubrey Meyhew
1226 16 Avenue South
Nashville, Tenn. 37212

Dear Mr. Meyhew,

The decision that had to be made when I wrote you August 13 was made when it could be delayed no longer.

The important sentence in your response of September 7 is indefinite and can be interpreted as in contradiction with what follows. These are:

"My collection and interest is not the assassination, rather preservation and research."

"I can't think of anything I would like better than to include your files and work in my collection."

If I interpret these two sentences to mean that you are not seeking a solution to the assassination but are interested in the fact of it and anything and everything relating thereto, they are not contradictory. If by "research" you refer not only to your own but to the making available to those who in the future would study and perhaps write, then you embody my hope. Unless this is what you mean, you are, I believe, doing nothing more than is already being done, officially and unofficially. I cannot conceive of a really meaningful JFK Museum anywhere, least of all in Dallas, without the fullestt possible record of the assassination itself.

My problem is not in arranging a satisfactory repository for my files. I have already been asked for them for a major eastern university. My problem is continuing the work, for it has been bankrupting. After what income I have had from my books, I am between $35,000 and $40,000 in debt. Thus, this being the limit of the indebtedness that is safe for me -and servicing it being a rather serious problem for me - the work I can do is seriously inhibited.

In order to continue this work, I have to use my files as an asset, use them as a means of continuing the work. To be able to do what I have, I have had to forget about any employment, so the conditions of our lives is difficult. However, when you ask "how much money are you talking about", you are asking about a variable. To a large degree, it will depend upon what you want. If you want every available official document relating to the assassination (much of it is not relevant but is part of the complete story), that could amount to a tidy sum I cannot estimate. I have in mind no more than themaking of my work possible. Here how long it will take and its thoroughness also are variables. I can, I am confident, arrange for what others have obtained. There are a number of people with whom I work. Here also, should it interest you, there would be some cost. I can not estimate it, but I think it would be relatively slight.

Were I to be more specific, even try to be, I would be deceiving you, and that I will not do. Nor could I even make a reasonable approximation without a better understanding of what you would like.

However, if you agree with me that a meaningful JFK Museum requires the evidence and records of his assassination, I do believe that, if you want it, I can have this part more complete than what is available at the National Archives. Moreover, it would also be of other values, such as in reflecting government in time of great crisis, as a commentary on popular reactions and attitudes, things like that. I think that in the future one of the scholarly interests will be in how government then and thereafter functioned. With the work I have already done, with the suits I have filed and will, somehow or another, still file, this aspect will be amplified considerably.

But here, too, we have what I have called a variable. Unless something I cannot now forsee eventuates, I will also have to be my own lawyer. In the suit filed most recently, I am. I have two more drafted and to be edited. By litigation I expect to get not only what is in the Archives and withheld but also more of what was withheld from the Presidential Commission itself. I now have crucial evidence that was denied the Commission. In one case, where I would have much preferred the largest possible color pictures I have had to content myself with 35mm transparencies because of cost. I realize this is all very general. To avoid long explanation, let me say of it that it is the very essence of what to lawyers is "best evidence". It relates to and is part of the autopsy. Can you conceive of such evidence being withheld from the Commission? It was.

This leads me to something else. I think the files of my correspondence with the Archives and other agencies will in themselves have great interest for scholars of the future.

My work and my interest are much broader than the fact of the assassination and the character of the official investigation. Because I am but one man who never had the facilities he needed, I have had to assign my own order of priorities to the work I do. I have completed the research for what I think will be a definitive work on JFK policy. A plausible case can be made for believing this may be related to the assassination. Whether or not one now believes this to be the case, or even a possibility, it is, I am confident, an area that will be of increasing scholarly interest in the future.

Were I to try and give you the kind of details I presume would interest you, the result might, again, be to deceive you. For example, I have what you cannot buy for any amount of money, a very clear copy of the Zapruder film of the assassination. It is a better copy than any in the Archives. But this is not true of all the pictures. Some I have made no effort to get. However, I have what I believe is a record of every known relevant one. Here again, in order not to leave you under a misapprehension, I have to qualify by saying that I have not yet been able to locate what may be the most important of all, taken by a photographer who was, in turn, photographed but who remains unknown to me. Also, here we have another of the variables to which you alone can provide the answer: would you want the effort, perhaps costly, made to get that film?

We have no children, so there is no desire on my part to will what I have to any one person. I would much prefer that it be accessible for serious purposes. Your project may well be the one best suited to my interests. What I want in return for it (and more, what I can get elsewhere) is simple and does not

represent any financial profit to me. It is no more than the means of continuing this work, hopefully under better conditions than have been possible to this point. I am now 57 years old, a very tired 57 after the intensity with which I have pursued it since the assassination. I would like to continue this work to the point of diminishing return, when most of the available information is gathered and that meaning which today can be attributed to it has been recorded.

May I also suggest that your own concept of your museum may, from time to time, undergo change? Several examples that come immediately to mind. One is a part on John Kennedy the man rather than the President. Here, to a degree, I can help you, but with material that would have to be completely unavailable for about 75 years. Another is in duplicating what is available elsewhere. One example here is of a speech not covered except by a friend of mine, who recorded it. I have gotten it and given it to the archive that is to be in the university I referred to earlier. There will be no problem getting another recording for you.

I hope you will understand that this is the best honest answer I can make to your questions. Of the availability of what I have and will have there is no question. The rest of the answers will really have to come from you.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg